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**ROBERT STEELE**  
President Pro Tempore  
**COMMISSIONER**  
2<sup>nd</sup> District

June 16, 2011

Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The proposed merger between AT&T and T-Mobile is a matter of public interest and improving civic engagement. Our nation's broadband capabilities and infrastructure are a vital component to our nation's economic security and also the strength of our civil society. Demand for mobile broadband and wireless services has been increasing exponentially over the last several years, and our nation's service providers have been facing strained wireless networks.

The announced merger between AT&T and T-Mobile has the capability to address current limits on our mobile broadband infrastructure. By combining companies' networks, consumers will benefit from expanded mobile broadband access. The merger can bring mobile broadband service availability to more than 97% of Americans. This will provide broadband access to roughly 55 million more Americans, addressing a key focal point of President Obama's agenda to enhance American competitiveness and economic growth and spread availability of broadband to more communities.

African Americans and other underserved groups will be direct beneficiaries from the expanded mobile broadband from this merger. Currently, African Americans have among the lowest adoption rates to high-speed services, and this presents challenges to the economic and social progress of our communities. Broadband access creates opportunities for users which may not otherwise be available to them. These opportunities include the ability to access education and training, start an entrepreneurial endeavor, and the chance to grow their professional networks – all online. While African Americans have limited access to broadband at home, they are among the highest subscribers to mobile device services. Enhancing broadband infrastructure and expanding coverage area can provide the spark that will allow our underserved African American communities to connect to the digital age.



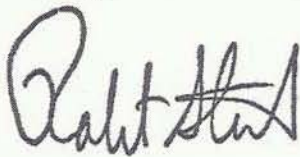
Access to high speed internet, and, more specifically, mobile broadband helps our citizens and businesses build and maintain an advantage in a competitive labor and business field. Research has shown that technology improves worker productivity, and that harnessing technology raises the earning potential of workers. Additionally, as time goes by, businesses will be more reliant on high speed internet to grow and expand their business opportunities. Without this merger, and the benefits that it offers, start-up firms, and businesses located in rural and underserved areas will remain at a disadvantage. Lack of access will become a hindrance to our nation's small businesses. Improving the capacity for mobile broadband directly benefits individuals and small businesses, both of which help to provide the foundation to stronger communities.

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AT&T has been a strong supporter of small business and entrepreneurship, as well as African American and minority-owned businesses. AT&T has long had a strong supplier diversity initiative. With their dedicated outreach to the minority business community, they have expanded contracting opportunities for the entrepreneurs of our underserved communities. This has allowed for greater minority job creation and the minority workforce now has greater access in the high tech sector. The proposed merger can allow for AT&T's outreach to minority-owned businesses to expand and thrive.

Our nation's interests and future relies on the ability of our citizens and small businesses to harness the opportunities of the digital age. I strongly urge you to support the proposed merger as a means to promote increased opportunities for the African American community and all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert Steele", with a stylized, cursive script.

Robert Steele  
President Pro Tempore  
Commissioner of Cook County Illinois  
Chairman of the Board, Lawndale Christian Health Center  
Chairman of the Board, Lawndale Neighborhood Advisory Board  
Chairman, Contract Compliance Committee  
Chairman, Human Relations Committee  
Vice-Chairman, Environmental Control Committee  
President of the Board of Trustees, Frazier Preparatory Academy